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Text of Tass Statement On Reaction to Tragedy

Following is the text of a statement on the South Korean plane as distributed by Tass, the Soviet press agency, on its English-language service:

Washington is feverishly covering up traces of the provocation staged against the Soviet Union with the utilization of the South Korean plane, which has flown out of the United States and intruded into the Soviet Union's airspace.

The White House and the Department of State are mounting a worldwide rabid anti-Soviet campaign. The tone is set by the U.S. President. In his statement permeated with frenzied hatred and malice for the Soviet State, for Socialism, using as a cover-up bombastic phrases about "humanism" and "noble feelings", the head of the White House is trying to convince public opinion that the U.S.S.R. allegedly is guilty of loss of life. Issuing forth torrents of vicious abuses, representatives of the U.S. Administration want to avoid answering clear questions: Why did the plane happen to find itself in the airspace of the Soviet Union, deviating by 500 kilometres from the existing international route? Why did the authorities of the U.S. and Japan, whose air traffic controlling services control flights of planes on this route, knowing that the plane had remained for a long time in Soviet airspace, had not taken appropriate measure to put an end to this flagrant violation of the sovereignty of the Soviet Union?

U.S. journalists also have been putting these questions to the U.S. Administration, and each time its representative has been wriggling out of answering them. However, the answer is necessary to find out the truth on who and for what purposes sent this plane to Soviet airspace.

French General Quoted

Let us quote a statement on this score, which was made on French television by General Gallois, a specialist of France in strategic issues. He declared: "the Soviet armed forces have two zones which may be considered as being top secret; the area of Murmansk in the Kola Peninsula and the zone of the Sea of Okhotsk, where the Kamchatka Peninsula and the island of Sakhalin are situated." There are, the general said, "a considerable part of the Soviet Navy concentrated and inter-continental ballistic missile testing facilities located there." General Gallois recalled that several years ago the Soviet Air Force in the area of the Kola Peninsula compelled what also was a "South Korean" plane to


land. Now an aircraft of the same company emerges in another strategically important area of the U.S.S.R. The scientific commentator of the French television program TF-1 summed up explicitly what had happened: "the Boeing 747 deliberately veered off course with the purpose of performing an intelligence mission."

Professor Stephen Meyer from the Massachusetts Technological Institute said that in the existing conditions the corresponding Soviet bodies had every reason to suspect that the plane was fulfilling an intelligence mission over a strategically important area.

U.S. officials are striving to prove that all this is "mere coincidence," that the plane "wandered off its flight path," that it "lost communication contact," etc. What "loss of communication contact" can it be, if the U.S. authorities admitted that they had been following the flight throughout its duration? The flimsiness of the attempts of the White House to justify the "appearance of the South Korean plane in the airspace of the Soviet Union by some technical malfunction" is also made obvious by the statements of the former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Japanese armed forces, at present the military observer of the newspaper "Mainichi Shimbun" G. Takeda. "with 'Boeing' having a computer on board, two pilots and a system of double-triple checking, the deviation of the plane of the South Korean air company looks more than strange," he writes in this newspaper. This is also confirmed by a report published by The New York Times.

Cite Japanese Agency

Materials, which were made public by the Japanese news agency Kyodo, prove the discourse of U.S. Administration spokesmen about some "technical troubles" on the intruder plane to be wholly untenable. Quoting sources which had been carefully monitoring that flight, the news agency reported that "the South Korean liner's radio communications with Japanese air traffic controller stations had been maintained almost until the very moment of the plane's disappearance." Thus, the Washington version that the plane's radio equipment got out of order and that its crew could not respond to the signals given to it does not correspond to reality. This is confirmed also by the

fact, reported by  than an hour after first attempt to establish contact with the Boeing, a telegram was sent from aboard the plane, which said, in particular, "the plane's navigational equipment is operating normally."

According to Australian newspapers, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency followed the plane's flight most closely. A BBC broadcast pointed out that U.S. and Japanese tracking services had been continuously tracking the South Korean plane over the entire length of its route but had not adopted measures to correct its path.

The Western press reported also that the crews of the South Korean liners on this route are made up solely of air force pilots.

The Australian newspaper Sidney Morning Herald pointed out, in its turn, that the South Korean plane could have been taken in the Soviet Union for a U.S. spy plane since on radars it looked like an intelligence plane of the U.S. Air Force, and that it could also well be mistaken for a U.S. F4B bomber.

All this corroborates the fact that the corresponding U.S. services had a direct relation to this provocation. The conclusion drawn by the New York correspondent of the Australian radio and television network ABC that the C.I.A.'s conduct in that whole affair appeared very suspicious, therefore, looks to have its grounds. Isn't it the involvement of the well-known terrorist center of the United States in the whole affair that caused U.S. State Department spokesman Hughes to sidestep on more than one occasion at a press conference in Washington journalists' questions of why the corresponding U.S. and Japanese services had not warned the plane that it had violated the airspace of the U.S.S.R. and why they had not guided it out of there.

In this connection, it is proper to ask: what the thoroughly hypocritical "sorrow" demonstrated by the White House is based on? Or does Mr. President believe that the very concept of national sovereignty no longer exists and one may intrude with impunity into the airspace of independent states? Or is he viewing the whole world now as a "zone of U.S. vital interests"?

There is one more side to this question. The U.S. President asks: How one can conduct negotiations with a state which is capable of such actions?

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